

Governor's Overdose Prevention and Intervention Task Force Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2016; Department of Administration

Task Force Members Present or represented:

Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, DOH
Rebecca Boss, BHDDH
Dr. James McDonald, RI Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline
Mike Rizzi, CODAC, Harm Reduction Representative
Jason Rhodes, DOH Emergency Medical Services
Dr. Gary Bubly, Emergency Department representative
A.T. Wall, DOC
Donna Policastro, RI Nurses Association
Nancy DeNuccio, Substance Abuse Prevention
Erin McDonough, MRC
Kevin Barry, Acting Colonel of State Police
Brian Sullivan, Police Chiefs Association

Dr. Alexander Scott welcomed everyone. Director Boss introduced Elizabeth Farrar, Linda Barovier, and Dan Fitzgerald from the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH) to present on how the primary prevention of substance use and abuse in Rhode Island plays a role in the Task Force.

Elizabeth Farrer presented on the Continuum of Care, which includes a spectrum of promotion, prevention, treatment, maintenance, and recovery. Primary prevention occurs before the diagnosis of disorder; she talked about the influence of risk and protective factors and emphasized that the goal of primary prevention is not just eliminating negative behaviors, but also about enhancing protective factors.

Linda Barovier presented examples of interventions at the individual, family, community, and societal level. She specified that risk factors of heroin-use include early onset of tobacco and other drug use, history of poly drug use, peer use and access, and school dropout.

Dan Fitzgerald presented on the BHDDH-funded primary prevention strategies in Rhode Island, which include school education, 34 community coalitions across Rhode Island, Student assistance programs in schools, drug take back days, drug disposal sites, Detera bags, lock bags, and public service announcements. He shared examples of some of the BHDDH awareness campaigns.

Elizabeth Farrer talked about opportunities for collaboration with the Task Force, such as attending Community Coalition meetings and opened it up to questions. Mary Dyer asked where to access the lock bags and Detera bags? It depends on community; Elizabeth will share vendor information with group. Dr. Cohen asked if efforts include parent education on early risk factors. Elizabeth responded that a recent survey shows that kids do care what their parents think, but parent engagement has been a huge problem. Nancy Denuccio emphasized that parents rarely attend events and they are trying other methods to reach them (i.e. newsletters, pediatricians, social media). Mike Rizzi raised the issue of college age kids that overdose when experimenting for first time and recommended we should think about how to reach this group (i.e. college orientation

events). Director Boss mentioned sharing data on community specific information is a way to engage parents.

Dr. Rich asked what is the best evidence-base for what works with primary prevention? He encouraged the group to use data to guide efforts in order to make the most impact. Director Boss emphasized the need to balance between activities that have an established evidence-base and those that are promising (i.e. Peer Recovery Coaches).

Dr. Alexander Scott introduced Kristine Campagna and Dr. Ailis Clyne to present on neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) Task Force. Dr. Clyne presented on the definition of NAS and the common symptoms. She emphasized that it is a very challenging situation for families and clinical staff. If baby needs medication, in New England, morphine is the medication of choice and it is important to monitor the baby in hospital for up to five days. She presented trend data on NAS in Rhode Island, which has increased over the past ten years. Dr. Rich asked how many of the cases represent babies born to mothers in active treatment vs. active drug use? Anecdotally, Dr. Clyne thought that the majority of mothers were in treatment; however, she said they could look into exact numbers and get back to the group. Kristine Campagna talked about the history of the NAS Task Force. The group was convened by RIDOH about a year and half ago, in response to increasing rates of NAS. It is a volunteer effort. Stakeholders involved are child welfare, treatment providers, family court, medical professionals, early care and education. The Task Force used initial meetings to assess the existing resources and identify missing connections. From this work, four subcommittees were established. The Training Subcommittee focuses on provider education. Currently, Dr. Traci Green has funding to develop and evaluate a curriculum for OB/GYNs and the Task Force is identifying needs of other professionals. The Prenatal Referral Mechanisms Subcommittee focuses on connect expecting mothers to parenting and family support resources at hospital and after discharge. The Hospitals Protocols Subcommittee is working to ensure that all birth hospitals in RI have standardized guidance and protocols for treating NAS. The Recovery Subcommittee is working to provide specialized recovery coaches to new and expecting parents. The Task Force is holding a conference on October 18. The flyer will be circulated to the group.

Mike Rizzi acknowledged the great collaboration and asked about availability of data in terms of number of women engaged in MAT overtime, which could be beneficial in demonstrating a change in attitude and acceptance of treatment.

Dr. Cohen asked what is best practice for length of stay in hospital and weaning babies from prescribed medications? Dr. Clyne responded that insurance companies are piloting medication free care, which requires 24/7 care and there may be some changes in best practices coming soon. Currently, the length of stay depends on medication treatment and social supports in place at discharge.

The Directors opened it up for public comment. A parent who lost her son shared her experience presenting to a high school assembly. After her talk, she received over 100 letters from impacted students. She acknowledged the barrier to get parents in the room and thanked the Task Force for the work they are doing. A former Senator who now has a Recovery Radio Show, which has up to 14,000 listeners, gave an open invite for Task Force members to come on his show. Director Alexander Scott and Director Boss adjourned the meeting.

